

MAROTH—OR, THE DISAPPOINTED

NO. 3184

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1910
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON
ON THURSDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 25, 1873

*“For the inhabitant of Maroth waited carefully for good:
but evil came down from the LORD unto the gate of Jerusalem.”
Micah 1:12*

THE village of the bitter spring, for that is probably the meaning of the name Maroth, experienced a bitter disappointment. At the time when the Assyrians invaded the land, the inhabitants expected that deliverance would come to them from some quarter or other. From the context, I judge that they placed some sort of reliance upon the Philistines. Possibly, they had some hope that the king of Egypt would come up to attack Sennacherib.

Evidently, they looked for help anywhere except to God, and consequently, as no good came to them from the men upon whom they had relied, trial and overwhelming distress came to them from the hand of God. He was angry at their trust in men, and their want of trust in Himself, and therefore He punished their unbelief by their total overthrow. The Assyrian swept over them and stopped not till he reached the gate of Jerusalem, where Hezekiah's faith in God made the enemy pause and retreat.

The fact recorded in the text suggests to us, first, *sad disappointments*, “the inhabitant of Maroth waited carefully for good: but evil came,” and secondly, *strange appointments*, “evil came down from the LORD.” When we have considered these two things, we will change the subject altogether, and speak about *expectations which will not end in disappointment*.

I. First, then, we are to think of SAD DISAPPOINTMENTS, “The inhabitant of Maroth waited carefully for good: but evil came.”

Disappointments are often extremely painful at the time. Even in little things, we do not like to be disappointed, if our expectations are not realized, we feel as if a sharp thorn has pierced our flesh. But in great matters disappointment is much more serious. In the case of the inhabitants of Maroth, it was fatal, they expected to be delivered from the Assyrians, but they were either slain on the spot or carried away captive to Nineveh.

It would be the most terrible disappointment of all if our expectations concerning our souls should not be realized. It would be painful to the last degree to discover, upon our dying bed, that the good we had looked for had not come—to find that we had built our house upon the sand, and that, when we most needed its shelter, it was swept away. O Lord, disappoint not Your servant's hope! All my expectation is from You, and You have said, “They shall not be ashamed that wait for me.” Any other expectation beside this, concerning our eternal interests, will only bring us pain and misery forever.

Disappointments in this life, however, although they are at times very painful, are sometimes of such a character that *could we know all the truth, we should not lament them*. There are many who have looked forward to a change in their condition in life, or their position in society, and they have been disappointed. For a time they have been ready to wring their hands in anguish, yet if they knew what the consequences would have been if their expectations had been realized, they would fall down upon their knees and devoutly praise the Lord for the disappointment which had been so great a blessing in disguise to them.

You, my brother, had expected to be rich by this time, but God knew that had you been rich, you would have been proud and worldly, and would have ceased to enjoy fellowship with Him, so He kept

you poor that you might still be rich in faith. You, my friend, had expected to be in robust health at this time, but had you been so, you might not have been walking so humbly before the Lord as you are now doing.

You, my oft-bereaved brother, had hoped to see your family spared to grow up, so that you might have had sons and daughters upon whom you could have leaned in your declining days, yet they might have proved a plague and a sorrow to you instead of a comfort and a blessing. Complain not that they were taken from you in their childhood by that kind hand which made them blest forever, and only deprived you for a while of their companionship, which might not have been an unmixed blessing to you.

Rest assured, O child of God, that whatever happens to you is as it should be! Believe that, if you could have infinite wisdom, and the helm of your life's vessel could be entrusted to your hands, you would steer it precisely as God steers it, you would not always guide the ship through smooth water any more than He does. If you could be unerring in judgment, and could be your own guide, you would choose for yourself the track which God has chosen for you. It is divine love and infallible wisdom that have ordered all things for you up to this very moment, so whatever your disappointments may have been, comfort yourself with the assurance that they have been among your greatest blessings.

There are some expectations which are certain to be disappointed. When a man expects to prosper through wrong-doing, his expectations will certainly not be realized, at least, not in the long run, however much he may seem to prosper for a while. When a man thinks that happiness can be found in the ways of sin, he will be bitterly disappointed sooner or later. When a man expects that, by self-reliance, he will be able to gain all that he needs without trusting to a stronger arm than his own, his expectations will not be realized.

When a man is relying upon his fellow creature, when he thinks that the all-important matter for him is to have some rich patron or powerful friend, and he is under the delusion that he can do without any help from heaven, he is sure to be disappointed, and he who is depending upon his own good works, and trusting to his own unaided resolutions to hold on in the way of holiness, will be terribly disappointed unless he repents before it is too late.

There are some things which only fools will expect—things which are contrary to the laws of nature, and things which are contrary to the rules of grace. The man who never sows good corn, but yet expects to reap at harvest time, is a fool, and his disappointment will come in the form of thorns and thistles all over his fields. The sluggard, who lies in bed and lazily says, “A little more sleep, a little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands to sleep,” may expect in that way to become wealthy, but Solomon long ago said to him, “Thy poverty shall come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.” This is true in spiritual things as well as in temporal. God gives blessing to effort and diligence, not to idleness and lethargy.

Besides this, *in many cases disappointments are highly probable.* Some of our familiar proverbs relate to such cases as these. One says, “Those who wait for dead men's shoes are pretty sure to go barefoot.” Another is, “If they never drink milk till they get their uncle's cow, they will be long thirsty for the want of it.” Yet there are persons who waste a great part of their lifetime in vain expectations of what they call “windfalls.” We know that the “windfalls” in the orchard generally fall because they are rotten, and are not worth picking up, and other “windfalls” are often no more valuable.

There are men who might have prospered if they had not foolishly sat down in the expectation that somehow or other, a great fortune would hunt them out and make them independent, such expectations are usually doomed to disappointment. If any of you have fallen into the pernicious habit of reading works of fiction, and so have formed romantic ideas of what is likely to occur to you, the great probability is that your daydreams will be only dreams, and your castles in the air will never be inhabited by you.

I pray you not to fritter away your time and opportunities in vain expectations which most probably will never be fulfilled. Expect to receive not quite all you earn, nor all you lend, and probably your

expectations will not be disappointed, but as another of our proverbs puts it, if you count your chickens before they are hatched, it is highly probable that your expectations will not be realized.

There are also *other expectations that will possibly end in disappointment*. Even the most legitimate hopes are not always realized. “There’s many a slip ’twixt the cup and the lips.” When we feel almost sure that a certain plan must succeed, suddenly it turns out to be all a mistake. We think that as prudent men, we have arranged matters so wisely that they must succeed, yet in the issue we are grievously disappointed.

Be not hasty in condemning those who do not succeed in business, for at least in some cases failure has come through no fault of theirs. Do not judge harshly all who are in need, no doubt there are all too many instances in which poverty is the result of idleness or drunkenness, but there are other cases in which poverty is blameless and even honorable. Men may toil hard, do the very best they can, and seek God’s blessing upon their efforts, and yet they may not be permitted to secure a competence. If you, my friend, reckon upon seeing all your schemes succeed, you are very likely to be disappointed.

If you, my Christian brother, imagine that between here and heaven, the way will be laid with smooth turf well rolled, you will certainly be disappointed. If you think that the sea will always be calm as a lake, and that no storm will ever ruffle it, you will be disappointed. There will be some things that will fulfill your expectations, but there will be others that will not, and in those you will be like the inhabitant of Maroth, who “waited carefully for good, but evil came.”

In every case, *disappointments should be borne with the greatest possible patience and equanimity*. I am sorry to say that we do not all bear them so, not even all of us who profess to be Christians. Remember that God has never promised that all our expectations shall be fulfilled, it would have been a doubtful blessing if such a thing had been guaranteed to us, and we might easily have expected ourselves into utter misery.

Who are you that everything should happen just as you wish? Should the weather be fine simply because you want it to be so when a thousand fields are gasping for rain? Should you have the channels of trade turned in your direction when, if that were the case, scores of others would be beggared? Is everything in this world to be so arranged that you shall be the darling and pet of providence?

It cannot be right for such a state of things to prevail, therefore, when we are disappointed, whether it is in little matters or great ones, let us bear the disappointment bravely, and lay the whole case before the Lord in prayer. Let us ask Him wherefore He contends with us, and if there be any reason for it which we can discover in ourselves, let us endeavor to remove it, or if we can find no cause, let us believe that God acts in wisdom and in love, and let us cheerfully submit to whatever He appoints for us.

We would bear our disappointments with all the greater equanimity if we would always remember that *disappointments are often exceedingly instructive*. What do they teach us? Well, first, they teach us that our judgment is very fallible. We learn from them that we are not such prophets as we thought we were, we fancied that if we said that such and such a thing was going to happen, it would surely be so, but when the result proved to be just the opposite, we found that our judgment was not as reliable as we thought it was, and therefore our forecast was quite inaccurate. So our disappointments teach us our need of greater wisdom than our own, and also teach us the folly of trusting to our own understanding.

They also teach us the uncertainty of everything that is earthly. What is there here that can be depended upon for a single hour? The life of the most robust may suddenly end, the current of affairs may change more rapidly than the tide. Riches take to themselves wings and fly away. The greatest wisdom becomes the greatest folly. All is vanity, and vexation of spirit. If our disappointments teach us this lesson, we shall be well repaid for having suffered them.

Let them also teach us to speak correctly, as Christians should. You know how the apostle James writes, “Go to now, ye that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow....For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.” Let our past disappointments warn us to speak with bated breath about tomorrow and the more distant future, and not to say without any

qualification what we will do as if all time were at our disposal, and we were the disposers of all events. Even if we do not always use the words, “If the Lord will,” “If God pleases,” “If we are spared,” or similar expressions, let the spirit of them always be in our mind, so that we do not think and speak unconditionally concerning the unknown future.

Let our disappointments also teach us to submit absolutely and unquestioningly to the Lord’s will. We wish to have things in a certain fashion, but God plainly indicated that they are not to be so, therefore let us cheerfully surrender our wish to His will. Surely, O child of God, you would not think of wanting to have your way when once you learn that it is contrary to your heavenly Father’s way! If you are right-minded, you will at once give up your wish and will say, “Not my will, O my Father, but thy will be done!”

You will probably do that all the more decidedly if some disappointment has burnt into your soul the truth that God is wiser than you are, and that His will must always prevail above yours. Stand to the surrender at all times, and say to the Lord, “Show me thy way, and let me hear the voice behind me saying, ‘This is the way; walk ye in it.’”

Let me also add that *disappointments may be greatly sanctified*. They are not so always, for sometimes they irritate, and so cause sin, or they create a murmuring spirit against God, and so make us worse than we were before. But sanctified disappointments are part of that rod of the covenant which is so beneficial in the hand of a chastening God.

Sometimes a grievous disappointment has changed the whole current of a person’s life. A man was looking forward to what he hoped would be a happy marriage, but his intended bride suddenly died, and then he surrendered his heart to Jesus, who became the Bridegroom of his soul. A son had expected to inherit a large estate, but by some means the wealth came not into his possession, and when he found himself poor, he sought true riches in Christ. A strong man had hoped to build up a prosperous business, but he was unexpectedly smitten with serious illness, his former prosperity departed from him, and then he fixed his hopes upon the ever-blessed Son of God, and so he attained to bliss which no earthly success could ever have brought him.

I remember meeting a man who told me that he could never see spiritually until he had lost his natural eyesight, and there have, doubtless, been many who were never rich until they became poor, and others who were never happy until their earthly happiness was blighted and blasted, and then they sought and found true happiness in Jesus. What a blessed disappointment it is that leads us to a Savior’s love!

Disappointments are also sanctified to believers when they help to wean them from the world. There is a sort of glue about this world that makes it adhere to us, and makes us adhere to it. David found it so when he wrote, “My soul cleaveth unto the dust.” Earth naturally clings to earth, but I will warrant you that David cared little enough for earth when his handsome son Absalom became a rebel, and when his house, which had been such a comfort to him, became a terror, and when his subjects, who had almost worshipped him, joined in rebelling against him.

Then did he plaintively sigh, “Oh, that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest.” Yes, disappointments wean us from the world, and makes us plume our wings ready to be up and away to that fair country where hope shall reach its full fruition, and disappointment shall be unknown forever.

Moreover, brethren, when we meet with disappointments in this life, we prize all the more the faithfulness of our God. When you have had an unkind word from one whom you have loved, how much more closely you have nestled down in the embrace of your ever-loving Savior! When you have been betrayed by a friend in whom you trusted, what sweet communion you have had with the Friend that sticketh closer than a brother! When your gourd above you has withered, and you have lost its welcome shade, how much more you have prized the shadow of a great rock in a weary land!

It is a good thing for us to have all earthly props knocked away, for then we value more than ever the faithfulness of the God who never fails those who put their trust in Him. Those who always remain on

dry land will never learn by practical experience what the sailors know. “They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the LORD, and His wonders in the deep,” and it is when, like the storm tossed mariners, our soul is melted because of trouble, that our dear Lord and Master, coming to us upon the crest of the wave, becomes tenfold more precious to us than He had ever been before.

If our disappointments would only make us hold with a loose hand all we have—house, and lands, and children, and health, and reputation, and everything—so that, if God should take them all away, we should still continue to bless His name because we never reckoned that they were ours to keep, but were only lent to us during our Lord’s good will and pleasure—if our disappointments only brought us to such a condition as that, they would be, indeed, most soul enriching things.

II. Now I must leave that part of the subject, and turn to the second portion, which is STRANGE APPOINTMENTS, “The inhabitant of Maroth waited carefully for good: but evil came down from the LORD.”

This expression must not be misunderstood. “Evil came down from the LORD.” The word “evil” here means trial, affliction, chastisement, and to a Christian this kind of “evil” is often for his highest good. It does seem singular to a child of God that even that which he thinks to be evil should come down from the Lord.

How can it be that God is loving and kind when He deprives one of His children of her husband, or takes away her babe from her bosom? How can it be that God is infinitely wise, yet He sometimes casts His poor weak children into difficulties where they are at their wits’ end, and know not what to do? How is it that He loves the righteous, and is gracious to them, yet He puts some of the best of them into the hottest part of the furnace, and makes it burn most furiously like that of Nebuchadnezzar of old?

If our aches and pains came from Satan. If our losses were the result of chance, or if our sufferings arose only from the malevolence of the wicked, they would be comprehensible, but it is oftentimes a marvel and a mystery to a Christian why the Lord sends the trials which lays upon him. Be patient, brothers, what you know not now, you shall know hereafter, so be content to wait until God reveals the mystery to you if He pleases to do so, and then it will make you marvel that your Lord should have taken such pains in training you for the service He has for you yet to render Him.

Perhaps I am addressing some child of God who is sorely puzzled as to why certain things have happened to him. But father, does your child always understand all that you do to him and for him? It was not long ago that your boy was sent away to school, perhaps he thought you unkind in treating him so, yet it was real love to him that prompted you to send him away from you to be all the better trained for whatever may lie before him in his later life. He does not understand all that is in your mind, and you can never comprehend all that is in the infinite mind of your Father who is in heaven. Be satisfied that whatever God does must be right.

Yet remember that in a certain sense, *all trials do come from God*. There may be secondary agents coming in between, but let us not cavil at them, or quarrel with them. When Shimei cursed David, Abishai said to the king, “Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head,” but David said, “Let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David.” He felt that he deserved to be cursed so he looked upon Shimei’s insults as being a form of chastisement from God.

If you strike a dog with a stick, he will bite the stick, but if he had more sense, he would try to bite you, and when we are chastened, it is foolish for us to be angry with the rod that God employs, and we dare not be angry with God. There may be sin in the person who causes us to suffer, as there was in the case of Shimei, but we must look beyond him even as David did, and learn what God’s intention is in thus chastening us, and submissively accept whatever God appoints.

There are some trials which come very distinctly from God. Perhaps you have lost one who was very dear to you, let it comfort your heart that it was the Lord who took away your loved one. There is an

empty chair in your house, and every time you look at it your eyes fill with tears, yet never forget that it was the Lord who called to Himself the one who used to occupy that chair.

Or possibly your trouble is that you are gradually fading away by consumption or some other deadly disease. Well, if it is so, that is God's appointment for you in the order of His providence, so do not rebel against what is clearly His will. Or it may be that your trial is that you have struggled hard to gain an honest livelihood for yourself and your family, but instead of attaining that end, you are constantly getting further and further away from it. If it is so, look upon your trouble as coming from God, and bear patiently what you are unable to alter.

This leads me to say to every Christian whose trial is distinctly from the Lord—my brother or sister, *this makes it all the easier for you to submit without murmuring to God's will.* When such a trial comes, there is nothing for a believer to say but this, "It is the LORD: let him do what seemeth him good." There may be cases in which submission will best be indicated by silence before the Lord. When Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, offered strange fire before the Lord, and there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, it must have been a terrible trial to their father, yet we read, "Aaron held his peace," as if he thought, "Since God has done it, what can I say?"

You know the oft repeated story of the gardener who had a favorite rose, and when it was plucked, he was very angry, but when he was told that the master had taken it, he said no more about the matter. May not the owner of the garden take any flowers in it that he pleases, and may not the Lord take away His beloved ones from us whenever He chooses to do so?

We ought not to be vexed with Him when He does so, but we ought to say with Job, "The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD." No, my Lord, I must not and I will not cavil at anything that You have done. Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth, but let not man strive with his Maker. In our case, it would not only be striving with our Maker, it would be striving with our best Friend, our Father, our all in all, and that we must never do. So, if the trial has come distinctly from God, it should be easy to submit to it.

And further, if it comes distinctly from God, *it gives all the more powerful plea in prayer.* One may plead thus, "O Lord, this trouble is not of my own making, You have sent it to me for Your own wise purposes, will You not bring me through it?" Another may say, "O Lord, I am very poor, yet this is not because I have been imprudent or extravagant, but because You have permitted it, so will You not help me in my time of need?" A sister pleads, "O Lord, I am in deep distress, my dear husband has been taken away, and I am left with many children, and with very scanty means, but as You have put me into this furnace, will You not be with me in it, and keep me from being consumed?"

When a soldier is sent on a campaign, he is not expected to bear his own charges, and if the great Captain of salvation has sent you out to fight for Him, He will meet your expenses. He will also cover your head in the day of battle and make you more than conqueror through His might. Did the Lord ever lay a heavier burden on any man than that man was able to bear unless He also gave him extra strength to enable him to bear it? Rest confident concerning the trial which God sends you, that He will also send you deliverance from it, or grace to glorify Him in it.

If His left hand smites you, His right hand will support you. If He frowns upon you today, He will smile upon you tomorrow. If He leads you into deep waters, He will bring you up again to the hills where He will gladden you with the light of His countenance. The deeper your sorrows, the higher shall be your joys, as your tribulations abound, so also shall your consolations abound by Jesus Christ. The groans of earth shall be surpassed by the songs of heaven, and the woes of time shall be swallowed up in the hallelujahs of eternity. So that, if in any of these senses evil comes down upon you from the Lord, I pray that He may give you the grace to accept it, and even to rejoice in it.

III. Now we are to close by thinking of EXPECTATIONS WHICH WILL NOT END IN DISAPPOINTMENT.

For instance, I expect, and so do you if you are the Lord's children, that *God will keep His promises.* It is not always so with men, for they make many promises which they never fulfill. There are men, who

are so rich and so reliable, that their signature to a check is as good as gold to the full value of the check, and God's promise is His check, which can be cashed at the Bank of Faith in every time of need. We are all too apt to rely upon our fellow men, even though they have failed us again and again, but we sometimes find it difficult to depend upon our God, although He has never failed anyone who has trusted Him.

O beloved, what wickedness lurks in that fact! If you believe every promise that God has given, you will be able to endorse the testimony that Joshua gave to the children of Israel just before he died, "Ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spoke concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof."

Then, next, *expect much from the merits and work of the Lord Jesus Christ*. If you have really believed in Him, expect to be justified by Him, expect that He will answer every accusation that can be brought against you either now or at the last great judgment day. Expect also to be preserved and kept by Him. Expect that He will go before you as your Shepherd, making you to lie down in green pastures, and leading you beside the still waters. Expect that He will plead for you in heaven and that He will soon come to take you up to dwell at His right hand forever. You cannot expect too much of Christ, and large as your expectations may be, none of them shall be disappointed.

And, beloved, *expect much from the work of the Holy Spirit*. If the Spirit of God has quickened you from your death in sin, what is there that He cannot and will not do? Are you in trouble? He can comfort you. Are you depressed? He can cheer you. Are you in the dark? He can enlighten you. Are you at this moment fighting against sin? He can enable you to gain the victory.

I am sure that many of God's children do not expect half as much as they ought from the Holy Spirit. They seem to imagine that there are some sins that cannot be driven out of them, they do not, in the power of the Spirit, put the sword to the throat of all their sins. Yet this should be the constant aim of every Christian, to drive out the Canaanites, and kill the last Amalekite with the edge of the sword.

The Spirit of God is able to subdue the fiercest temper, He is able to impart activity to the most slothful nature, He is able to repress the wildest and most evil desires, He is able to excite us to those virtues which seem to be directly opposite to our natural temperaments and characters. "All things are possible to him that believeth." If he will but wholly trust to the Holy Spirit, he shall be able to do great exploits in the war that has to be waged within his own heart, and also in the fight against evil which is raging all around him.

If time would permit, I might go on urging you to cherish expectations which are not likely to be disappointed, but I can only summarize them very briefly. Expect tonight that God will bless you as you offer up your evening prayer. Expect that the Lord will be with you tomorrow sustaining you amid all the cares and toils of the day. Expect for all the days of your active life that, as your days, so shall your strength be, and when your declining years come, expect that consolation will be given to you to meet every emergency.

In sickness, expect to receive sustaining grace. In death itself, expect the Lord's very special presence. Expect a glorious resurrection. Expect the triumph that you shall share with Christ in His millennial glory. Expect an eternity of bliss with Him as He has promised, and rest assured that none of these expectations shall be disappointed.

I fear that there are some here who have no right to cherish any of these expectations. You have probably had disappointments about many things already. I cannot pity you very much concerning the trivial disappointments of this life, but if you do not seek the Savior while He is to be found, there is a disappointment in store for you that might well fill all Christian hearts with tenderest pity and compassion.

Here is a man who has lived a life of selfish pleasure, he has been clothed in scarlet and fine linen, and has fared sumptuously every day, and on a sudden the voice of God declares that he must die. What

will be his horror when he sees all his treasures melting away, and himself doomed to depart out of this world as naked as when he entered it!

Imagine the case of the man who has been what he calls religious, who has attended to all the ceremonies of his church, or who has been orthodox after the fashion of the sect to which he belongs, but who has had no new birth, and consequently, none of the life of God in his soul, no indwelling Spirit, no vital connection with the Lord Jesus Christ, the one and only Savior.

Yet he has expected to be ferried across the bridgeless river by one called Vain-hope, and when the hour of death has come, God has opened his eyes to let him see his real position, and the dread future that is awaiting him. Oh, the terror of that man when his vain and unfounded hopes are disappointed! We have read of some who have offered a great portion of their wealth if they might only be allowed to live another hour, but it was all in vain, for die they must.

God save all of you, my dear hearers, from such a doom as that! In order that it may be so, put not your trust in things below, be not like the inhabitants of Maroth, who looked to the Philistines and the Egyptians to help them, and so waited in vain for the good that never came, but turn your eyes unto Him who says, “Look unto me, and be ye saved,” and then your expectations shall not be disappointed. So may it be, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

HEBREWS 4

(This exposition belongs to sermon No. 3182, Boldness at the Throne, but there was no space available for it there).

Verse 1. *Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.*

Not only dread coming short, but dread the very appearance of it. Oh, that we might now enter into that rest, and so clearly enjoy it that there should not even be a seeming to come short of it!

2. *For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.* [See sermon #2089, Profitable Mixture].

They were not united to it by faith, consequently, as they did not receive the Word, it was taken away from them.

3. *For we which have believed do enter into rest,*—[See sermons #866, Rest, and #2090, A Delicious Experience].

Faith brings us into this rest, even as unbelief shut them out.

3. *As he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.*

That is God’s rest, the rest of a finished work, and into that rest many never enter. The work by which they might live forever, the finished work by which they might be saved, they refuse, and so they never enter into God’s rest.

4-5. *For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. And in this place again, if they shall enter into my rest.*

There are many professing Christians who do not understand what it is to rest because the work of salvation is done, they do not even seem to know that the work is done. They understand not that dying word of the Lord Jesus, “It is finished.” They think there is something still to be added to His work to make it effectual, but it is not so.

6-8. *Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, Today, after so long a time; as it is said, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.*

We read of this in the ninety-fifth psalm, where David was urging those to whom he was writing to hear God's voice, and not be like the unbelievers in the wilderness, so that the rest still remained to be entered upon by somebody. Joshua had not given them rest, or else David would not have spoken of entering into rest.

9-10. *There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.*

He says, "It is finished. I am no longer going to do my own works, I have done with them, I now trust the finished work of Christ, and that gives me rest. But as to all that wearied me before, and made life a continual task and toil, it is ended now." God is not a cruel taskmaster to His people, He gives rest to those who trust in Him, and some of us have entered into that rest.

11. *Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.*

Let us not repeat the story of unbelieving Israel in our own lives, let us not live and die in the wilderness, but let us go in and take possession of the promised land, the promised rest, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

12. *For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

This verse may be interpreted with reference to the incarnate Word or to the inspired Word, and they are so closely united and related to one another that we need not attempt to separate them, but see Christ in the Word, and the Word in Christ, and learn that both Christ and the Word do for us all that the apostle here declares.

13. *Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.*

However great a revealer the Word may be, however clear a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, the God who gave the Word is even more so.

14. *Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.*

Shall we desert Him now that He has gone into heaven to represent us, now that He has fought the fight, and won the victory on our behalf, and gone up to heaven as our Representative? God forbid!

15-16. *For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.* [See sermon #2148, The Tenderness of Jesus]. *Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.